



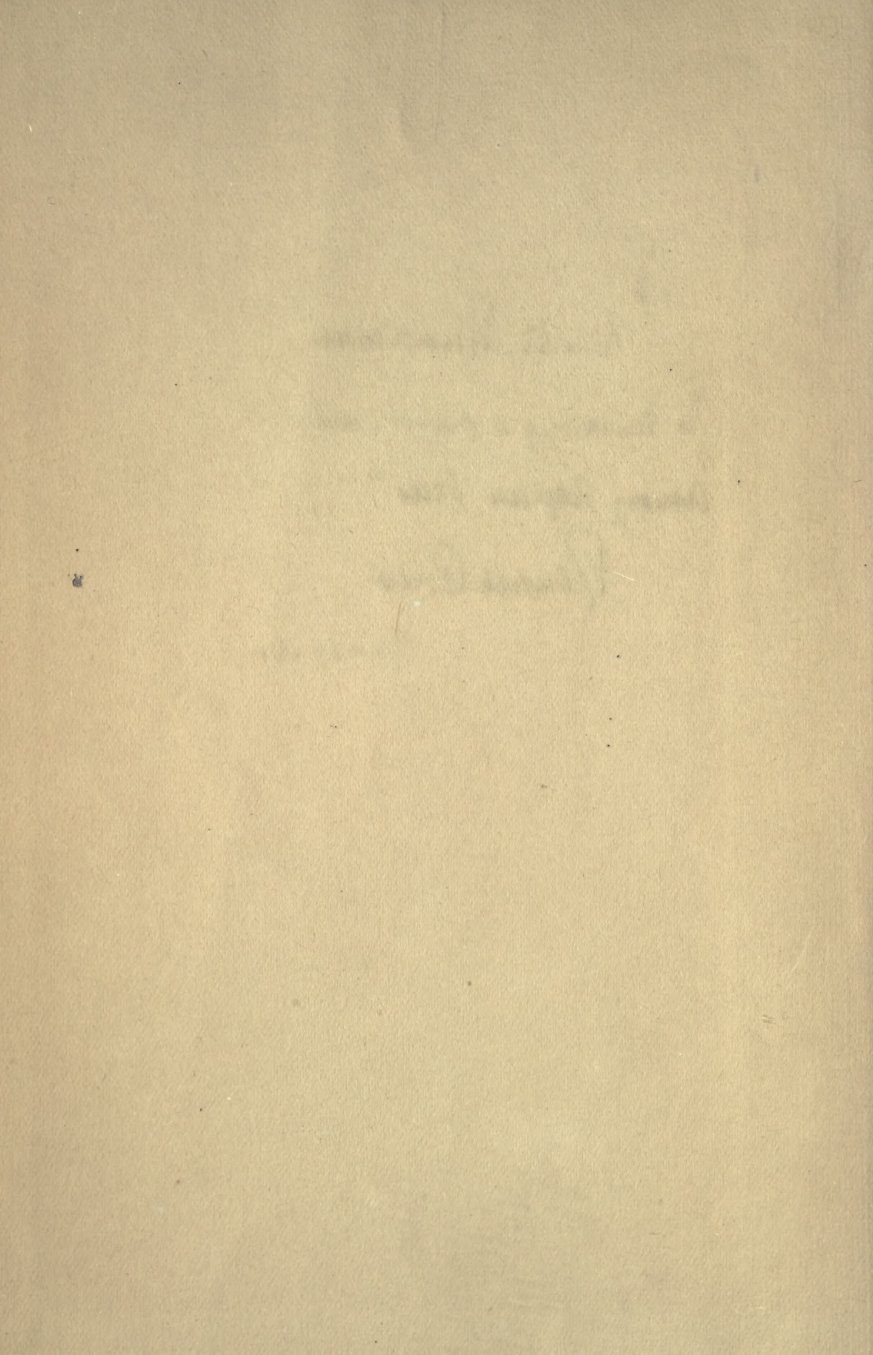
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To

Walter Runciman

In memory of a perfect cruise  
"Among Aegean Isles"

Renck Rodd

April 1924.



THE VIOLET CROWN



*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

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# THE VIOLET CROWN

BY

SIR RENNELL RODD

AUTHOR OF 'BALLADS OF THE FLEET,' 'FEDA,' ETC.

*SECOND EDITION*

WITH SEVERAL NEW POEMS

LONDON  
EDWARD ARNOLD

1913



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## PREFACE

*The Violet Crown* was originally published some twenty years ago, and has been for nearly as many out of print. The author has often been asked to issue a new edition. The present would seem a suitable moment, and his decision to do so has been influenced not a little by a very charming book from whose pages he has realised that in Greece itself these English poems had found appreciative readers. (*Tales of a Greek Island*, by Julia D. Dragoumis.)

In the present edition one or two short pieces which appeared in the former volume have been omitted, and their place is filled by two new ones, 'Sulla in Athens' and 'The Passing of Alaric.' The former of these has already appeared in *Scribner's Magazine*. The other added poems have not hitherto been published in any volume, but

'Ninfa' has also appeared in *Scribner's*, 'Spring in the Campagna' in the *New York Nation*, and the 'Memorial Verses to Frank Rhodes' in the *London Outlook*.

R. R.

ROME, January 1913.



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## THE VIOLET CROWN

WHEREFORE the 'city of the violet crown'?

One asked me, as the April sun went down  
Behind the shadows of the Persian's mound,  
The fretted crags of Salamis.

‘Look round,

And see the question answered!’

For we were

Upon the summit of that battled square,  
The rock of ruin, in whose fallen shrine  
The world still worships what man made divine,  
The maiden fane, that yet may boast the birth  
Of half the immortalities of earth.

The last rays light the portal, a gold wave  
Runs up the columns to the architrave,  
Lingers about the gable and is gone :—  
Parnes, Hymettus, and Pentelicon  
Show shadowy violet in the after-rose,

Cithæron's ridge and all the islands close  
The mountain ring, like sapphires o'er the sea,  
And from this circle's heart ætherially  
Springs the white altar of the land's renown,  
A marble lily in a violet crown.

And fairer crown had never queen than this  
That girds thee round, far-famed Acropolis !  
So of these isles, these mountains, and this sea,  
I wove a crown of song to dedicate to thee.



THE KEYNOTE

A CYPRESS dark against the blue,  
That deepens up to such a hue  
As never painter dared and drew ;

A marble shaft that stands alone  
Above a wreck of sculptured stone  
With grey-green aloes overgrown ;

A hillside scored with hollow veins  
Through age-long wash of autumn rains,  
As purple as with vintage stains ;

And rocks that while the hours run  
Show all the jewels, one by one,  
For pastime of the summer sun ;

A crescent sail upon the sea,  
So calm and fair and ripple-free,  
You wonder storms can ever be ;

*THE VIOLET CROWN*

A shore with deep indented bays,  
And o'er the gleaming waterways  
A glimpse of islands in the haze ;

A face bronzed dark to red and gold,  
With mountain eyes that seem to hold  
The freshness of the world of old ;

A shepherd's crook, a coat of fleece,  
A grazing flock ;—the sense of peace,  
The long sweet silence,—this is Greece !



## HELLAS

It is not only that the sun  
Loves best these southern lands,  
It is not for the trophies won  
Of old by hero hands,  
That nature wreathed in softer smiles  
Was here the bride of art ;  
A closer kinship claims these isles,  
The love-land of the heart.  
It is because the poet's dream  
Still haunts each happy vale,  
That peopled every grove and stream  
To fit his fairy tale.

There may be greener vales and hills  
Less bare to shelter man ;  
But still they want the naiad rills,  
And miss the pipe of Pan.  
There may be other isles as fair  
And summer seas as blue,

But then Odysseus touched not there,  
Nor Argo beached her crew.  
The Nereid-haunted river shore,  
The Faun-frequented dell,  
Possess me with their magic more  
Than sites where Cæsars fell :  
And where the blooms of Zante blow  
Their incense to the waves ;  
Where Ithaca's dark headlands show  
The legendary caves ;  
Where in the deep of olive groves  
The summer hardly dies ;  
Where fair Phæacia's sun-brown maids  
Still keep their siren eyes ;  
Where Chalcis strains with loving lips  
Towards the little bay,  
The strand that held the thousand ships,  
The Aulis of delay ;  
Where Œta's ridge of granite bars  
The gate Thermopylæ,  
Where huge Orion crowned with stars  
Looks down on Rhodope ;  
Where once Apollo tended flocks  
On Phera's lofty plain,

Where Peneus cleaves the stubborn rocks  
    To find the outer main ;  
Where Argos and Mycenæ sleep  
    With all the buried wrong,  
And where Arcadian uplands keep  
    The antique shepherd song,  
There is a spirit haunts the place  
    All other lands must lack,  
A speaking voice, a living grace,  
    That beckons fancy back.

Dear isles and sea-indented shore,  
    Till songs be no more sung,  
The singers that have gone before  
    Will keep your lovers young :  
And men will hymn your haunted skies,  
    And seek your holy streams,  
Until the soul of music dies,  
    And earth has done with dreams.



## THITHER

BEYOND Albania's headlands high  
The misted sun rose, struggled free,  
Outblanched the roses of the sky,  
And flashed upon an opal sea ;  
Then, from their mythos-world of night,  
The poet's islands swam in sight—  
That link between the east and west,  
Phæacia's pleasant land of rest ;  
The land of men that loved the oar,  
Which, in the morning light of yore,  
Poseidon to his kinsfolk gave,  
And made them masters of the wave.  
And many an isle less known to fame,  
Like floating leaves and flowers came ;  
And many a shore by sea-nymphs ranged,  
Ere gods and men became estranged ;  
Till, through the hush of afternoon,  
We sailed between the sun and moon,

By Leucas and the lovers' leap,  
Where still the amorous breezes weep  
The echoes of a Lesbian air  
And Sappho's purple-shadowed hair.  
Then last, as bleak and barren still,  
His home, the man of iron will,  
Of many a wile and many a part,  
Odysseus, of the stubborn heart ;  
Which never, never since he fared  
On that mysterious voyage, dared  
Explore the untried western deep,  
Has broken through her trance of sleep.  
The sunset flushed her capes and caves,  
And lingered on the wine-red waves,  
Till late beyond our eastward prow  
The moonlight blanched a mountain brow,  
And shadows of the violet seas  
Closed o'er the isles Echinades.  
Then, as it were a giant bay,  
The hills closed in on either hand,  
To north the rough Ætolia lay  
And on the south was Pelops' land.

## MISOLONGHI

THE rosy dawn broke from her ocean bed—  
A sailor pointed to the north, and said  
The one word, 'Misolonghi!' Lifted high,  
Between the mists of water and of sky,  
In the mirage of sunrise, there it lay,  
The heart of Hellas in her darkest day.

And there and then, across that morning sea,  
The eager heart went throbbing back to thee,  
For here, dead poet of my dreams of youth,  
Thy long denial learned the one hard truth.

Oft with thee since, my poet, where the steep  
Of Sunium sees red evening dye the deep,  
Where broad Eurotas cleaves the garden lands  
That knew no walls but Spartan hearts and hands,  
Where snowy-crested into cloudless skies  
The two throne-mountains of the muses rise ;



Mount up, O poet, still they seem to say,  
Pathless and lonely winds the starward way,  
Look never back, thou hast thy song to sing,  
Thy life is winter, so thy death be spring.  
Oft with thee after, when the sun went down  
Behind Morea, through the violet crown,  
Seen from the broken temples, when the ray  
Transforms Hymettus from noon's silver grey  
To one rose jewel, when the islands be  
Like broken sapphires on a milky sea,  
And still thy mute voice echoes near ; but most  
A moment later when the light is lost,  
And Athens sobers in the afterglow  
Of such a spiritual twilight as I know  
No other spot of sea and earth can show ;  
Thou art grown one with these things, and thy fame  
Links a new memory to each sacred name.

Oh formed for loving, and condemned by fate,  
By some obstruction of the heart, to hate,  
Cursed with the spirit of an evil doubt,  
That would not open when love knocked without,  
Doomed to rebellion, and untimely born,  
To mar high music with the note of scorn,

Appealing still against thyself in song,  
How I had loved thee, erring, proud, and strong !

Yet, let me think here by these haunted seas,  
Too fair to need their dower of memories ;  
Here, where the whisperings of spring-tide eve  
Bring kinship with the infinite, and weave  
Bright rosaries of stars, where never fails  
Incense of thyme, and hymn of nightingales,  
That oft the beauty of this fair world stole  
Across the tumult of thy lonely soul,  
Till the ice thawed, and the storm broke in spray,  
The cold heart warmed, and knew the better way,  
To see some hope in human things, to crave  
That late remorse of love men lavished on thy grave.

## AN ATTIC NIGHT

ABOVE Hymettus' long dark sundering ridge—  
Not cold and chaste as in my own far world,  
But pale for passion and yet warm with love—  
Midsummer's moon bends earthward, and the stars  
Pale at her advent ; through the cypress tops  
A silent shiver of delight runs o'er,  
And dreaming earth grows open-eyed once more.

These hillside aloes pierce the sapphire night  
Like some great battle struck into a trance  
With all its sword-blades lifted, and above  
An ivory stair climbs up the silver rocks  
Through roofless columns of a marble gate ;  
This is the rock of Athens, reared sublime,  
Crowned with quick stars above the night of time.

Enter the door of silence ! Far away  
The thousand twinkling little lights recede,



And stars grow nearer, while the flitting owls  
Repeat unseen the same shrill note in sound,  
The nomad bells of flocks that move by night  
Come from the distance :—thou art all alone  
With shadows haunting a dead world of stone.

Lo with a mystic radiance round its scars,  
Hardly a ruin in this healing light,  
The fairest pile that ever human hearts  
Built to enshrine their young ideal mood !  
The moon is on one side the colonnade,  
Steals through its rent of battle, seeks in vain  
The sister goddess in her fallen fane.

Alas for dead ideals, and alas  
Immortal moods are bounded by a day !  
Once only here such throbbing life upburst  
To the full at every issue, snatched the fire  
Quick from the life springs, dared and overcame  
While still the childhood of the heart was free ;  
There was but once one Athens, or could be !

Here wrought the strong creator, and he laid  
The marble on the limestone, in the crag

Morticed the sure foundations, line to line  
And arc to arc repeating as it grew ;  
Veiling the secret of its strength in grace,  
Till like a marble flower in blue Greek air  
Perfect it rose, an afterworld's despair.

And here man made his most divine appeal  
To the eternal in the heart of man,  
The mute appeal of beauty, crying still  
Rhythmic across the ages that are dumb.  
And lo ! it lies a ruin, and the owls  
Dwell in the splintered cornice, and the moon  
Blanches the broken discords into tune.

Come from the ruin, this despairing note  
Steals like a siren music on the soul  
And the sweet way of sadness lures ; come forth !  
For now the moon has mounted, and yon sea  
Is all a fire of jewels,—far away  
To dim Ægina misty in the west  
She takes the benediction on her breast.

And all the mountains are a wonder world  
Of untried promise, and the larger stars

Burn steadfast still, and from the south there comes  
A breath like odours blown from Paradise  
Scented and cool and soothing ; so we turn  
From man's supremest to God's every day,  
And dimly feel our solace lies that way.

Burn on, bright stars ! gleam through the night, white  
sea !

If I have loved the living world of men,  
Their hopes and dreams, the labour of their hands,  
And trusted much and, doubting, trusted still,  
Yet Nature was my mother and my guide,  
And ever nearest, and when all else failed,  
Her arms were open still and her great love  
prevailed.



## THERMOPYLÆ

THIS is the place ;—the mountain bay  
Is wild, and stern, and grand,  
As when the Lion held the way  
That barred his mother-land.  
Long years and change and earthquake shock  
Have wrought upon the scene,  
Where once the sea waves lapped the rock  
Are meadow-lands grown green ;  
But Oeta still looms vast and grey  
To hide the setting sun,  
And still the mountains bar the way,  
And every way but one :  
The sulphur springs still fume and flow  
Along the rough hillside,  
And far-off Othrys veiled in snow  
Sees where the Spartan died.

There is a spirit haunts the place  
Where mighty deeds were dared,

Though time and change have left no trace,  
And not a grave be spared :  
And climbing up the grassy hill  
Where Sparta's lion stood,  
The heart still answers to the thrill,  
That marks the hero mood.  
And as I read the page again,  
That quickens from the dust  
The tale of those three hundred men  
Who died to keep their trust,  
I knew the fire was not yet lost  
That nerved my younger age ;—  
The shadow of an eagle crossed,  
And fell along my page !

## DELOS

WE came to an isle of flowers  
That lay in a trance of sleep,  
In a world forgotten of ours,  
Far out on a sapphire deep.

Dwellers were none on the island,  
And far as the eye could see  
From the shore to the central highland  
Was never a bush nor tree.

Long, long had her fields lain fallow,  
And the drought had dried her rills,  
But the vetch and the gourd and mallow  
Ran riot on all her hills.

The length of her shoreward level,  
High bank and terrace and quay,  
Were red with a scarlet revel  
Of poppies down to the sea ;

Each bloom pressed close on its fellow,  
The marigolds peeped between,  
Till the scarlet and the yellow  
Had hidden the under-green.

Was it here, that heart of a nation,  
That first of the fanes of old !  
This garden of desolation,  
This ruin of red, of gold ?

High up from the rock-cleft hollow,  
Roofed over of Titan hands ;  
The cradle of dead Apollo  
Still looks to his silent lands.

The sacred lake lies solemn,  
In a havoc of fallen shrines ;  
Where the shaft of each broken column  
Is tangled about with vines.

It lives in the dreams which haunt it,  
This isle of the Sun-god's birth,  
It lives in the songs which vaunt it  
The holiest earth on earth.



But the shrines without note or number  
Lie wrecked on a barren shore,  
And the dead ideals slumber  
For ever and evermore.

So Spring in her pride of pity  
Had hidden the marble wraith,  
And shed on the holy city  
The flower of sleep and death.

## IN ARCADIA

TO L. S.

I THINK we shall keep for ever in the heart of us,  
you and I,  
That first Arcadian evening, till the day we come to  
die.

We had crossed from the rugged border, through the  
fierce Messenian hills,  
And we came to the oak-wood pastures, to a ripple  
of mountain rills.

The late noon waned to the eventide and the gather-  
ing in of flocks,  
The shepherd called with his uncouth cries to the  
goats far up in the rocks ;

While the kids leaped down with their startled eyes,  
and paused for a drink at the spring,  
As he strode along in his kilted pride, with the gait  
of a mountain king.

The steep hills sloped to a narrow vale through  
willow and oak and pear,  
To the gold-green sage on the further side, and the  
thyme that hung in the air ;

The corn-plots waved in the hollow, and the planes  
were marvellous green,  
Where the young nymph-haunted Neda was a luminous  
thread between.

The day went over the westward ridge too soon in  
the mountain world,  
And the thousand frail sun-wearied convolvulus bells  
were furled.

A turtle cooed on the farther side, and the scented air  
of the vale  
Was quick with tremulous throbbing of the song of  
the nightingale.

A mist rose up from the waters and the stream-nymph  
veiled her charms,  
Where the mountain clasped her closest in the grasp  
of his purple arms.

It was red gold over the western peaks and pale in  
the Southern sky,  
It was middle May in the full moon time, and the  
land was Arcady !

And the scent of the thyme and the song of the bird  
drew a calm down over the breast,  
The stream ran by with a soothing voice, and the  
note of it all was rest.

Ah, well with you, happy valleys, where the roar of  
the world is still,  
Where the brain may pause in the battle of life, and  
the eyes may drink their fill !

And well with you, fair green isles, in your girdle of  
surf apart,  
With never a rumour of march and change, Avalons  
of the weary heart !

The sunset over those gilded hills was more than an  
earthly name,  
The moon was brighter than glory, the stars seemed  
better than fame.



And we, we shall keep I know in the heart of us,  
you and I,

That first Arcadian evening till the day we come to  
die.

## THE SIREN SONG

I HEARD it in the happy isles  
Blown down the dying day,  
The summer song whose lilt beguiles  
The wanderer to stay :

It followed in the shorewind's breath,  
The magic still was strong,  
Although the note of change and death  
Has touched the Sirens' song.

They do not lure to new delights  
Beyond what life has known,  
To happy days and happy nights  
In summer's slumber-zone ;

But only, 'who will rest awhile  
From riot and from ruth,  
Forget in such a sunny smile  
The brazen eyes of truth !

'Come hither, hither, come and dream  
Of years dead long ago,  
Until the earth and ocean seem  
The world that poets know.

'Come back and dwell with hopes long dead  
And what will never be !  
Avert thine eyes and turn thine head  
From the world's way oversea !

'For here are drowsy dreams to cheat  
The eyes that else would weep,  
And inland seas to bathe the feet,  
And quiet vales for sleep.'

But deadly in the Sirens' song  
As ever in the ears,  
And ropes of faith must bind him strong  
Who bides it when he hears.

For some have hearkened, lain them down  
And drunk a deadly thing,  
And soon the storms of winter drown  
The hollow hope of spring.

Pass, phantom music, pass away !  
The purple isles grow dim ;  
The glamour of the dying day  
Fades on the ocean's rim.

Enchantress of the mossy caves,  
Sleep by thy drowsy streams !  
The cradle of the rocking waves  
Is worth a world of dreams !

O living love, my happy hills  
Be wheresoe'er thou art !  
There is no help for human ills  
But in the human heart ;

So be the haven near or far,  
Blow winds and freshen sea,  
The morrow's hope, the morning star,  
The living world for me !



## TÆNARON

Nè dolcezza di figlio, nè la piéta  
Del vecchio padre, nè il debito amore  
Lo qual dovea Penelope far lieta,  
Vincer potero dentro a me l'ardore  
Ch'io ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto,  
E degli vizj umani, e del valore.

*Inferno, xxvi.*

THE sun sank slowly through the purple waves,  
Flashed yet a moment on bluff Matapan,  
While up the crest a rosy glamour ran,  
And shadows deepened in the gaps and caves.

I came that evening to a little creek,  
After long travel through a stone-cursed land,  
Rock only, rock above, on either hand —  
A barren wilderness, and what to seek?

A race as wild as nature where they dwell  
Nested in towers on the mountain crown,  
Blood in their passions, murder their renown  
An ancient race, since Lacedæmon fell

And the war-flutes shrilled no longer, and strange folk  
With alien voices thronged the land, and drank  
From sacred fountains, Moslem, Sclave, or Frank  
These stubborn mountains never felt their yoke.

It was full summer in the Southern May,  
And all day long I rode among the rocks,  
Stumbled and clattered through the marble blocks,  
Till even stayed me by a little bay,

Hid in the hollow of the sea-cliff's arm,  
Half shelving shore and half a rock-wall sheer  
Above whose rim one dim star rose to peer ;—  
The silence wrought upon me like a charm.

A summer peace lay on the sapphire deep,  
Only close by a few late ripples played  
O'er hues of amber, amethyst, and jade,  
And darker madders where the oar-weeds sleep.

A little bark that dared not venture nigh  
Showed through the sea-cliff's shadow ; but no tree,  
No herb, no living thing was there to see,  
Only the rocks, the waters, and the sky.

The waves of years had smoothed a narrow ledge  
With age long beating on the earth's rough bound,  
And there I wandered from our camping ground,  
And watched the ripple fretting at the edge.

Then I grew 'ware how by that twilight creek  
An old man sat and stared across the seas,  
Steadfast, with arms that rested on his knees,  
And hollow hands that propped a hoary cheek ;

His hair was white, his beard was grizzled grey,  
Yet was a fresh sea-keenness in his eyes  
That rose not, fell not, nor betrayed surprise,  
But ever watched the fading track of day.

His garb was strange, and stained, and rent, and old,  
And I could see, for all the light was dim,  
That he was great and strong, and stout of limb,  
And surely fashioned in heroic mould.

And rather to himself I thought than me,  
Softly and musingly he seemed to speak,  
In rhythmic measure of the yore-world Greek  
That has the cadence of the lapping sea.

‘Lo, I am he that could not drink his fill  
Of earthly knowledge in his little span,  
Who craved a lot too great for common man,—  
I am Odysseus, and I wander still.

‘The world, methinks, grows very old, the years  
Write deeper furrows in the sea-cliff’s face ;  
Change ! change in all, save in the human race,  
The same old passions and old loves and tears.

‘They come and go—the little dust and breath—  
Whose only knowledge is that all things pass,  
And with that little dust at times, alas !  
A spirit nobler than its doom of death.

‘No life of man transcends the common lot,  
The worm that crawleth hath no need for wings ;  
I might have taught them many strange new things,  
Old things forgotten, but they hearkened not.

‘Earth has no use for me, I go no more  
Into the valleys and the tracks of men ;  
And now the seas are crowded out of ken,  
And alien faces throng along the shore.



‘I think Athena is long dead, or sleeps,  
Grown callous, but the grim Poseidon still  
Lives on, and drives me at his wanton will  
By barren shallows and by pathless deeps.

‘For ever in some little lonely bay  
I pass the friendless daylight, till the dark  
Shows forth the beacons of the night that mark  
My westward course towards the dying day ;

‘Then on and on into the sunset track,  
To where I have the blessed hope to die,  
To where the islands of the heroes lie,  
But he relentless ever beats me back.

‘Thus once or twice I have descried from far  
A faint grey shadow in the morning haze,  
The outlines of my native land, the bays,  
The long sought hills, beneath a waning star.

‘The land I won and knew not how to keep,  
Wearying of ease, the altar and the loom,  
The thralls, the banquet, weary to my doom,  
For I am weary, weary of the deep.

‘I am as old as the world’s age, well nigh,  
Too old for effort and too tired for strife,  
For ever drifting round the fringe of life,  
And worn with waiting for the day to die.’

Thus while he spoke he rose to his full height,  
Making a blank between the stars and me,  
Waded a little space into the sea  
And vanished in the shadow of the night.

But softly like the echo of a sigh  
Came back, as though upon a wind asleep,  
‘For I am weary, weary of the deep,  
And worn with waiting for the day to die.’

Then, in a little while across the bay  
I heard a splash like spirit oars, that broke  
Upon the stillness with a measured stroke,  
Fainter and fainter till it passed away.

## SUNSET IN ÆGINA

THE light that is on sea and sky  
This April eve of earth  
Would touch the saddest heart to mirth,  
Or reconcile the lightest mood  
To kinship with a sigh :—  
The little cloud-flakes, evening's own,  
Red with the dead day's blood,  
Seem scattered rose leaves overblown  
Upon a windless mere ;  
The sapphire mountains fret the gold,  
These more than mountains here—  
The dream-hills of the songs of old—  
Cut luminous and clear.  
The glow is on the April green,  
And every outline softly keen  
Stands out against the sunset sheen.  
The world is washed in such a flood of air  
So rosy and so freshly fair,

As though, if God in heaven saw meet,  
    To sweep all stains away,  
And leave earth pure and virgin-sweet  
    As on creation-day.  
O ship, with sails against the sun,  
    Dark on the amber deep,  
Thou wilt not make beyond the west  
A better island of the blest !  
The splendid day was past and done,  
    The day we could not keep,  
The purple died along the slope,  
    The moon blanched in the blue,  
And steadfast like a good man's hope  
    The star of evening grew.

*ILISSUS' BANK*

A PLANE-TREE by Ilissus' bed,  
A bank of shade to prop the head,  
With scanty grass, and frequent stone—  
A summer noon to dream alone.

The hand of change ha stouched the scene,—  
No more are meads of pleasant green ;  
The thin few trees have much ado  
To leaf a little, and renew  
The ravage of the autumn suns  
By channels where no water runs.  
But as of old the tettix trills,  
The bee booms past to heather hills,  
And in the mountain gullies deep  
The blue noon shadows lie asleep.

Yet not alone—for by the stream  
Were two that walked the path of dream ;



The one, who seemed the type and flower  
Of Athens in her golden hour,  
When youth and strength were tuned to grace ;  
And one, the plain, familiar face—  
The man that I would rather meet  
Some evening in the tripod-street,  
With gait uncouth and dome-shaped brow,  
Than all the world of then or now :  
The thick lips parted, and the hands  
Close clasped behind his back, he stands,  
With head thrust out, and starting eyes  
That bear the glare of noonday skies.

And first the younger had his say,  
That presence like a fresh spring day,  
An eloquent impulsive strain,  
While I sat quiet by the plane.

Then might he hear who listened well  
The tale I heard the elder tell :  
Of love's ideal, which is truth,  
The fluttering of the soul of youth  
Aspiring still to seek above  
That far-off, dim-remembered love,

Till, gazing up to heavenly things,  
It finds at last the long-lost wings.

The noon goes by, the even rose  
Fades up Hymettus' side and goes,  
A wind comes shoreward from the sea,  
And wakes a rustle in the tree,  
The shadows fall, and even so  
The dream is done ; yet, ere I go,  
I, too, may pray the prayer he prayed  
To Pan and whatso Dryad maid  
Possessed the soul of summer trees  
And shed sweet influence over these,  
If not to such, as best I know  
The prayer he made long years ago,  
For beauty in the inward soul—  
The path is changed but not the goal.

## SULLA AT ATHENS

HE sat upon the terraced rock of Pnyx,  
The dreadful victor, ruthless to avenge  
His blight of nature on the blood of man,  
Red-handed Sulla. The close Roman helm  
Shaded his leprous visage, and his eyes,  
Fierce as an eagle's, watched the ruddy smoke  
From low Piræus blotting out the sun,  
While the mined gates fell crumbling one by one.

From shore to shore, from Sunium to Thebes,  
The land lay seared and bleeding. By the quays,  
Grim skeletons with blackened ribs adrift,  
The hulls and barges smouldered. Famished slaves,  
Sweating beneath the legionaries' lash,  
Toiled for new masters, levelling the great walls,  
The long strong arms which her Themistocles  
Had stretched to guard her throne above the seas.

For Rome had spoken. And the voice of fate  
Was Lucius Sulla's, and those thin drawn lips

Were pitiless as death. Vain any plea  
To purge rebellion's trespass, or avert  
His coldly purposed vengeance. Long, too long,  
The 'leaguered folk had battled with despair :  
Now gaunt with famine, silent, cowed and penned  
In their doomed city they abode the end.

Only at times a train of suppliants came,—  
Pale starving wives, with babes at barren breast,  
Young maids with hair unbound and haggard eyes :—  
Humbly afar they knelt down in the dust,  
Beating their bosoms, flinging up white arms  
With prayerful palms extended. But none passed  
The screen of lictors, and the hollow sky  
Alone received their ineffectual cry.

And the priests followed, grave and bowed with years,  
Pointing the fillets on their hoary brows,  
Craving his pity for the ancient fanes,  
The shrines of heroes in all lands renowned ;  
Lest she be roused, the goddess of dread name,  
Resentful of usurped omnipotence.  
Unmoved he heard ; he mocked not man's despair,  
But their own gods were not more deaf to prayer.

Yet, ever as his captains came and went,  
Or messengers with streaming brows rode in  
To lay their tablets on his knees, a voice,  
Low but insistent, hushed and yet again  
Prevailing through the clamour of the noon,  
Touched the reluctant mystic ; a voice strange  
And yet familiar, dominant to fill  
The conscious soul that wrestled with his will.

‘Lift up thine eyes, O victor, to the sun,  
Gilding the roof of the great fane, and say  
Has earth another miracle like this !  
Was ever work of human hand so fair,  
So throned, so footstooled ? Is there any land  
So holy for the memory of her sons ?  
Alas for man, the dust that borrows breath,  
Whose work outlives his own swift doom of death !

‘Was it not here, while still his half-formed mind  
Groped in the dimness for a god to guide,  
Quaked at the thunder, shuddered in the noon,  
That first the living thought struck fire to light  
The darkness of the unawakened soul ;  
Gave the quick stars an order in the sky,



Based the deep roots of wisdom, showed the way  
That all men travel in her wake to-day ?

‘ Was this not she who in the dawn of years,  
The lonely outpost of the west, stood firm  
When all the myriads of the teeming east  
Were poured like sand upon her shores ? Alone,  
She bore the shock upon the crescent plain  
That lies beneath yon marble peak. Alone,  
Ere Rome was Rome, her dauntless hundreds drave  
The baffled east back on the sundering wave !

‘ Was this not she who, when a second time  
They came in fleets that darkened all the sea,  
Left roof and hearth and in light ships went down  
To where yon island narrows the twin gulfs,  
Staked all upon her wooden walls and sank  
A thousand galleys in her furious charge,  
Then from her ashes re-arose like this,  
Herself the trophy of her Salamis ?

‘ Was it not here that in her triumph’s hour  
Men wrought the marble into forms so fair  
The very gods might envy, conjured earth

Into the hues of sunset and of dawn,  
Made the blood pulsate on her pictured walls,  
Divined the mysteries of sound, the rhythm  
Of balanced arc and angle and design  
Till man's high craft grew worthy the divine?

'Was it not here,—is not the live air quick  
With voices none shall silence, theirs who taught  
The afterworld the sum of all it knows?  
Has Rome not paid her tributary back  
A thousandfold with tribute of the heart,  
And worn these steps with reverent pilgrim feet?  
O victor, ere the bitter day be spent,  
For those she bore, for all they were, relent!'

The low voice ceased.—And now the autumn sun  
Rested on far Cyllene, sank, and left  
The fleeting magic of the twilight spell  
On Athens in her ring of purple hills,  
Throned and transfigured. In the pause of change  
The stricken city seemed to sigh.—He rose  
And sheathed his sword and—'Be it so'—he said,  
'I will forgive the living for the dead.'

## THE PASSING OF ALARIC

SOUTHWARD,—Through lands of dream unravaged  
yet,

By towns white gleaming to the inland bays,  
Dark groves that shadowed colonnaded shrines,  
By streams nymph-haunted, solitary vales  
Where still the awe of ancient sanctitudes  
Possessed the silence of the noon, and still,  
Unconscious of the strife of empires, peace  
Compassed the half-forgotten world of Greece.

Southward from Thrace, the rebel of two Romes,  
Across the parched Thessalian plain he drew,  
The young victorious Norseman : on his helm  
The wild-goose wings spread crescent-wise displayed  
The mark of pryncedom ; his long flaxen hair  
Fell to the leathern corselet ;—and his Goths,  
Gazing on Oeta and the encroaching sea,  
Streamed through the narrows of Thermopylæ.

No foeman stayed them. In a grass-grown mound  
The heart that once gave heart to heroes slept,  
Cold as the mouldering lion on its crest.  
The tides of Aulis washed a silent shore  
Whose barks had fled to Chalcis ; only Thebes  
From high Cadmeia watched the host roll by  
To where Cithaeron's rocky folds conceal  
A booty worthier of the Amal's steel.

And now Eleusis lay in sight ; not yet  
Were the Earth Mother's sacraments forsworn,  
And no steep rampart walled the holy site.  
Gold gleamed the temple roof-plates, massive stood  
The columned aisles rock-morticed ; hoary groves  
Awed the last pilgrims of a passing faith,  
And still within the innermost recess  
The mystic felt her potency to bless.

Half tranced he stood, outmarching all his van,  
A world of wonder in his steel blue eyes ;  
The silent magic touched him ; scarce heard he  
The hoarse wolf-voices of his braves exult  
Scenting the hoarded treasure ; till the cry  
Rose from the tonsured Arians of his train,—

Let God arise and His avenging flame  
Purge this affront to His eternal name !

Alas for great Eleusis ! on her shrine,  
Worship and wonder of a thousand years,  
The savage horde rolled like a wave of doom.  
Alas the ivory marvels and the gold,  
Flung on the creaking wagons ! and alas,  
The trophied marbles shattered, and the bronze !  
While mænad war-hymns mocked the old world's woe  
Till the last fire of sacrifice burned low.

He left Eleusis as the quick night fell  
A smouldering ruin and a stifled wail,  
And under a great autumn moon he climbed  
The tomb-fringed gradient of the sacred way,  
To stand on high Aegaleos ere the dawn.  
And far beneath him in the shadowy plain  
He saw the city dreamed of, ivory white,  
Burning her startled watch-fires in the night.

Slowly day grew prevailing, and the moon  
Paled in the west, the gabled roofs took life,  
And on the buttressed citadel's high ridge



The golden spear-blade of a mighty lance  
Flashed back the sun ;—up rose Athena's self  
Defiant and defendant ;—and the lilt  
Of ancient sagas like long sleeping fires  
Roused the old Norse blood of his Baltic sires.

‘ Hail ! Alaric's Hail ! Thou warrior maid of God ! ’  
He cried. ‘ On what grim day of battle here  
Descending didst thou bring this land renown !  
Back, ye red war-wolves, quench your eager brands,  
Leaguer the wagons !—Lo, from yonder height  
The daughter of the Aesir greets her kin !  
No strife shall desecrate her harvest fields,  
And I will pass unscathed the gates her honour  
shields.’

## THE DREAM OF PHIDIAS

COME in and see these marble gods of mine  
Finished and fair now, fit to take their place !  
The hand's achievement, if not all the heart's,  
As first it flashed forth in the fever glow.  
Not yet, Aspasia, has the fire of youth  
Died out so wholly ; I still try to dream  
The hand must answer to the heart some day,  
Art compass my ideal. Vain, I know,  
The thought, but I must cling to it. If aught  
Of life and might and majesty illumine  
These marble shapes, bethink you how they moved  
Divine and dreadful in the artist's soul !  
Not yet !—though years increase, and age, they say,  
Reveals to man the measure of his might,  
Restrains youth's wild ambitions, so we may  
Grow perfect in the attainable, nor waste  
The pith of manhood pining for the star.  
But while I may I'll wrestle with my dream !  
Oh, there are times I madden at the thought

Of impotence to render what I know ;  
Always this long laborious process, years  
And pains that go to do one small thing well,  
The poor and partial triumph at the best ;  
And all the while new visions lure in vain.  
So hears the poet in his soul the sounds  
Mystic, divine, and awful ; on his lips  
Only confused low murmuring of high things,  
Not one untroubled echo of delight.  
I can conceive a life let go in dreams  
From sheer despair of saving what it sees.  
Why are we made so—to behold at times  
The heavens open, feel the giant's soul  
All capable, with man's weak wearying hand  
To grope and struggle in its orb confined  
After the shape that glorified the dream ?

Well, dreams are dreams. I had a dream one day ;  
I had gone up into the marble hill  
To watch the quarrying, mark what blocks might be  
Fair grained and flawless for this work of mine,  
And it was sultry on the heights, and noon,  
When great Pan sleeps away from the chase,  
Men say, and pause is on the summer world.

There is a little deep-cut rock ravine,  
Cooled with fresh water of perennial springs,  
Hidden and low under the burning slopes,  
Where summer through the oleanders blow  
Rose-red among the shadows, and the air  
Is lightly scented with the myrtle bloom ;  
And thither wandering as chance would, alone,  
I made the thyme my pillow, and with face  
Turned to Pentelikon I fell asleep,  
And sleeping dreamed.

There in my dream I saw  
The mighty gable of the mountain brow  
Gleam all one marble surface, smoothed and fair,  
Huge and refulgent in the summer sun,  
Shaped like the pediment of some vast shrine  
For heroes' worship ; and I saw and felt,  
Like a great sweep of music through my soul,  
The artist's inspiration. Grandly grouped  
Ranged the immortals in an awful line,  
A revelation on an arc of sky.  
There in the midst arose the unconceived,  
The vast and ancient Ouranos, o'erbowed  
To snatch the laughing Earth into his breast,

Earth, the new mother, reaching forth her arms  
And straining upward her surrendered lips,  
Led on by Love, the oldest of all gods,  
And evermore the youngest, Love, the life  
Of all things living, wedding earth to sky.  
And in the wake of Ouranos, the Winds,  
An eager rout of lustiness and life,  
The Season's sequence, and the dance of Hours,  
The maiden keepers of the gate of heaven  
Kissing the rosy fingers of the Dawn—  
All these sprang into being; and beyond  
Upreared the fiery coursers of the sun,  
Spurning the æther with immortal feet,  
Mounting and mounting. So in Earth's fair train  
Followed her sons the mountains, and the brood  
Earth-born that haunt the forests and the rills,  
And all the streams that issue from her breast—  
A living ripple from the rock's white heart—  
And all the rivers of the world drew on  
To Ocean rising on a marble wave  
Throned on the car that shakes the rooted hills  
And girdles round creation. After these  
Was hoary Kronos, with the shadowy eyes  
Bent down with weight of ages; kneeling o'er



The form of Rhea, and for counterpart  
Night sank at rest into the veiled embrace  
Of Erebos, on the other side of day,—  
The night of time behind the life and light,  
Bounding the term of knowledge, for beyond  
Where Tartaros, the dim unfathomed void,  
Should be, lay Death, and on the other side  
His brother Sleep, with wings about his brow,  
And drooping eyes that watch across a dream.  
All these I saw, each in his proper place,  
Huge and immortal, as a god should stand ;  
And every metope showed a glorious form—  
Man, in the morning of his youth and strength,  
Under the gods, but not a whit less fair ;  
For all this meant the truce of God with man,  
The miracle of life, the glory of the world.

Then a voice cried to me, ' Arise, conform  
The hand's achievement to the heart's desire !'  
And I was lifted with a giant's strength,  
A giant's arm against the gleaming wall  
Moving about it on the wings of air ;  
And the white marble rained to earth like snow  
Freed by the spring winds as I hacked and hewed

Shaping the thoughts that billowed through my brain.  
Time I knew not, nor effort, but the hand  
Answered the spirit as a ship the helm,  
Till all the mountain grew instinct with life  
As at my bidding. When I paused at last  
The sun lay on the crags of Salamis,  
And I surveyed my finished work, the glow  
Gilding the marble forehead of the gods,  
The realised conception. One great throb  
Of gladness went up through the artist's soul,  
And once on earth dreaming I was content.  
Then lo, I saw how it was lifted up  
On blue pilasters of the evening sky,  
In the sun's face, crowned with the dawning stars,  
Dwarfing mankind's achievement, vast, sublime,  
Worthy of God, and worthy that ideal  
God spurs man ever vainly to pursue.

When I awoke it was all twilight round ;  
The misted purple of the mountain-peak  
Looked far ethereal, pointing to a star,  
As though it yearned to reach it, and in vain ;  
But near it broadened to the breast of earth  
With long strong arms that gathered in the plain.

The silent pathos touched me, and I found  
A solace for my vanished dream ; for while  
The summit strained toward the unreached star,  
Deep in the earth its strong foundations lay.  
And so, Aspasia, will I keep my dreams  
And still aspire, if vainly ! but no less  
Perfect this hand within its lowlier sphere,  
Be strong in my own strength, and compass here  
Some part maybe of things attainable  
Before the twilight closes to the night.

## TANAGRA

WE rode through mellowing cornlands, deep ravines,  
By torrent beds where oleanders nod,  
Up paths of arbutus and evergreens,  
And flowery carpets that no feet have trod.

Yet all this lonely land is holy ground,  
Strewn with dead dust of cities, such an one  
You chance upon, a low wall ringing round  
The wilderness of thistle, grass and stone.

There rose the citadel, these mounds were streets,  
That crescent hill was where the actors played,  
The lentisk bushes have usurped the seats  
Where camps the Wallack goatherd in the shade.

And this was Tanagra, this waste of weed,  
These hillocks with the buried life within,  
A few rough gravestones keep their names to read—  
One broken fragment bore the name Corinne.

Ah ! scarcely hers whose flawless face and fame  
The old world wondered at, a lordlier grave  
Enshrined in death those lyric lips, whose name  
Is all of her that after years might save.

Yet here, where once she saw the living light  
And struck the chord of passion, there it lay,  
And that mere word upon the stone had might,  
A moment's space to flash the dark to day,

To dreams of fanes bedecked with myrtle boughs,  
Dreams of the Theban contest and the prize,  
The laurel snatched from Pindar's throbbing brows,  
And bound above a minstrel maiden's eyes.

Was it the music wholly or the grace  
For which the swan of Dirce drooped his wing,  
The fount of passion, or the fair, fair face,  
While Thebes was mute to hear a woman sing ?

Ringed sit the priests, the judges of the song,  
The maiden muse stands passion-pale between,  
Loud for the Theban, louder and more long,  
Break forth the plaudits for the Tanagrine.



There winds the glad procession, the white row  
Of virgin escort up the marble street,  
The twin-pipes pealing shrilly as they go,  
To lay the tripod at the song-god's feet !

Such power the dead voice had ! long years have kept  
No note of songs that filled the mouth of fame,  
No record how she loved or laughed or wept,  
Naught but the face, the triumph, and the name ;

These and what dreams memorial lands still keep,  
Where mighty presences have passed and been,  
Where Leucas shows the Lesbian's lover-leap,  
Where Tanagra still whispers of Corinne.

CHRISTMAS IN THE ÆGEAN

It is the eve of Christmas in the world,  
But gentle as a morn of spring,—the deep  
One opal to the sky-line, as in sleep  
Drifts past the seagull with her wide wings furled.

We floated on between the isles that lie  
Like leaves of lilies in a summer mere,  
And dreamed no storm wind ever ventured near  
This zone of peace between the sea and sky.

We dreamed of golden galleys and of quays  
Bright with their burden of long colonnades,  
The shrines of passion and the mystic glades,  
The siren cities of the Cyclades.

Where are the island voices now? The mirth  
Is dead or silent; no mad laughter thrills  
The dance of Oreads in the happy hills  
Where twilight settles on a sadder earth.

For here on that first Christmas eve, men said  
They heard a sound like sobbing in the breeze,  
A sound that scared the fisher from the seas,  
A wail blown earthward, crying, 'Pan is dead!'

The feet of time have touched the rocky shore,  
There is a change behind the changlessness,  
The suns of summer warm the world no less,  
But the light heart of morning,—never more!

So day went down behind the ocean rim,  
While westward the sweet star of silence grew  
Through yellow hazes melting into blue;  
The shadows deepened till the isles were dim.

Then like a soul forsaken, hushed in fright  
The dark world seemed to pause, no ripple broke,  
No wind, no voice of earth or ocean spoke,  
While the stars watched from the great arch of night;

Till faintly eastward flushed the hope of morn,  
Pale with one star prevailing, till the grey  
Lifted, the new sun triumphed, and strong day  
Woke with a song voice, crying, 'Christ is born!'

## AKROTIRI OF CRETE

THERE is a rocky half isle in the deep  
With jagged peaks, with sea-walls bare and steep ;  
With scanty pasture for the goats that climb  
From ledge to ledge, and bruise the mountain thyme ;  
Only dwarf holly and low lentisk clings  
In hollows sheltered from the north wind's wings,  
Dark gullies where the mountain vultures sway  
On poising pinions, watching for their prey,  
For hunted beasts will find their way to die  
In such a solitude 'twixt earth and sky.  
A stony desert parts that land unkind  
From green Cydonia's summer world behind,  
Where ancient olives silver the rich plain,  
Ringed in their fence of aloes, till again  
The vine-slopes climb to Ida's mountain chain.

And yet there is a green spot in this waste,  
A garden in the desert, man has placed

An altar in the solitude, come here to dwell  
With contemplation in a hermit's cell.  
Long years ago men counted this their good,  
Fled from the world's way, chose the solitude,  
Went out into the deserts, barefoot trod  
The rocks that bruised them, agonised to God,  
Welcomed the lash, the torture and the chain,  
And dreamed of heaven in the pause of pain.  
But now, dear God, has love not cast out fear?  
These lonely eremites, what do they here?

Enter thou in between the cypress rows,  
Mount up the stair ;—four terraced walls enclose  
A court, the church, a citron by the well ;—  
Is it a fortress or a cloister cell?  
Speak with those hermits,—have they thoughts to  
think  
Worthy this deep seclusion? Do they drink  
A deeper well of knowledge? Bearded cheek,  
Locks like the Nazarite, do they bespeak  
Mystics, who commune oft with God below,  
The priests of contemplation? Surely,—No!  
Ask, you will find them ignorant and poor,  
A few rude peasants in a cowl, no more!



What do they here, walled sullenly within,  
Secure at ease while others toil and spin ?  
What do they here, men stout and strong of limb,  
Between the matin and the vesper hymn ?  
Fasting or feasting, letting real life go,  
While other men must dig and reap and sow,  
Smiling their welcome to who comes their way  
With half-remembered empty forms to pray !  
Is this man's portion, between earth and sky,  
To crawl in indolence, to live and die ?

And yet not so ! Be patient, being wise,  
Nay, proud, not patient ; learn to recognise  
The dawns of endeavour, the good seed  
Sown in a land that knows its hunger's need.  
Here, where the passions of her sons are rude,  
And fierce as nature's in her wildest mood,  
Where hate is painted with the blood she spills,  
And murder harbours in the savage hills,  
It was well thought to build this home of peace,  
To watch the olives and the vines increase,  
Where, unmolested in a world of strife,  
Unlettered hermits lead the quiet life.

So slowly men mount upwards. Be their praise  
This garden island in the stony ways,  
Where flocks feed quietly, birds build and sing,  
Men sleep unscared beneath the shadow of God's  
wing.

## THE CYCLADES

THE summer seas lie smooth and fair,  
The pause of sunrise holds the air,  
The canvas woos the wind in vain  
That chased the moon and dropped again ;  
All round us on the pearly deep  
Dim forms of islands seem to sleep,  
For suns of morning hardly break  
Their truce of silence when they wake,  
Whom years of woes have taught to bless  
The peace of sweet forgetfulness.

O summer isles, whose young desires  
Were music once on living lyres,  
What time the Teian made divine  
His wreath of roses drenched in wine,  
The Lesbian sang her woman's woe  
In bars of passion we but know,  
Across a void of silence drear  
From other hearts that throbbed to hear,  
What ills untold make up the sum

That struck your soul of music dumb,  
Through all the ages dark with crime  
When earth was in her travail time !—  
Her virgin youth was sunned with smiles  
In these blue wave-engirdled isles,  
But passion came, and youth went by,  
The golden age was quick to die.

From west and east what white sails came  
Whose only freight was sword and flame,  
Beflagged with Crescent or with Cross,  
Whose either gain was human loss !  
O fierce red years of ruth and wrong,  
You ill befit a summer song !  
The smoking homes, the parting cries,  
The hell let loose on paradise,  
The lonely lives in alien lands,  
The wrenched embrace of clinging hands,  
When men were slain and women slaved,  
Who death in better boon had craved,  
While dread o'ershadowed every morn,  
And night fell on a world forlorn ;  
The naked to the mountains fled,  
And all the wells were choked with dead !

Ah me, the fair things made for joy  
It needed ages to destroy,  
The colonnades on marble quays,  
The valleys cool with waving trees,  
The terraced orchards up the hill,  
The shrines we might have worshipped still,  
The statues in the myrtle glade !  
But man has marred what man had made,  
What God and man had best combined,  
And left the barren rocks behind.

The waves have washed the blood away  
And ocean smiles her best to-day,  
But will the voices wake once more  
That made such music heretofore,  
It echoes still across the tears  
Of twice a thousand silent years ?  
Ah, surely, world of summer isles,  
For hearts are here and woman's smiles,  
And dreams to dream, and deeds to do,  
And years of ruin to renew ;  
The last wild storm has passed to peace,  
It found you still the soul of Greece.



## CALLISTE

IN May, when oleanders bloom,  
What time the gold was on the broom,  
Before the moon was full above  
A world that seemed but made for love,  
When glow-worms lit the way we went  
To bruise the hill thyme into scent,  
The shadows of your raven hair,  
The charm of movements free as air,  
Your wild bird grace of shy replies,  
The mischief in your sea-deep eyes,  
Had tempted me to whisper you  
The word world-old, but ever new,  
The word that seemed so light to say  
When oleanders bloomed in May.

But, ah, Calliste, over sea  
The fickle wind sets where for me  
Lie other ways and other cares ;—  
For you the soft Ægean airs,

The sails in yonder haven furled  
To tell you of the outside world,  
The starry nights, the spring's perfume  
Returning with the orange bloom,  
The simple prayer you know to pray,  
The ready mirth, and then some day  
Some sailor with the broad brown chest  
To snatch the flower from your breast,  
To knot his fingers in your hair,  
Draw up your face and call it fair,  
And say the word I dared not say  
When oleanders bloomed in May.

## THE SONG OF THE KLEPHT

*The red fire flickered through the sea-bound cave,  
A lamb was roasting on the spit—the wave  
Broke low and soothing round the sandy bay,  
And on the sky-line hung the ghost of day.  
Ringed round the fire we sat, the wine-cup passed  
From each to other—no one spoke at last.*

*Old Janni in the linen kilt, with red  
Rough-knotted kerchief round his grizzled head,  
And mighty cloak of goat's frieze, mused and rolled  
The paper round Agrinion's weed of gold,  
Then snatched an ember from the thyme-root fire,  
And blew the smoke in cloudy wreaths.*

*His Sire*

*Was with Odysseus on the mountain-side  
In the wild days before the land was free ;  
Such war-songs rocked his cradle, when the bride  
Would sling beneath the dark vallonea tree  
Her infant's leather hammock :—*

*So sang he.*

What has become of Dimos, the Dimos that we  
knew,

Who never missed the mark he aimed, whose blade  
was keen and true,

Who wore the silver pistols, the shoulder-bits of  
gold,

The golden braided jacket, and the kilt of treble  
fold?

He left our high liméri, he drew the lot and went  
To tell the rest in Agrapha our powder stores were  
spent.

He was not gone an hour, an hour by the sun,  
When a distant shot rang up the hills, and then  
another one;

We sprang to foot and listened, held breath and  
dropped the lyre,

We heard a hundred echoes take up the running fire;  
And through the thymy boulders, in cover of the  
trees,

We slid along the broken ledge, and crawled upon  
our knees,

Until we saw the vultures come sailing up the blue,  
And circle round the rocky gorge, his way went  
winding through.

And there lay two Liápids, a hundred feet apart,  
The first was stark and not quite cold, with a bullet  
    through his heart ;

And one had fallen headlong, from out the torrent  
    bed

His rigid eyes stared grimly, and he was not quite  
    dead ;

The silent curse was on his lips, and round his  
    matted hair

A purple stain ran down the stones—but Dimos was  
    not there.

The earth was dry, the rocks were bare, and track  
    was none to find,

Did they bear the living with them, and leave their  
    dead behind ?

His mother from the village comes like a thing  
    bereft,

And wanders round the hollow hills through the  
    eyries of the Klepht,

And ‘ Have you seen my Dimos, have you seen my  
    bonny son,

Who wore the Aga’s pistols and the silver-mounted  
    gun ?



My curse on you black mountain, dark gorge and  
river-bed,

You took my Dimos living, and you hide him from  
me dead !'

There's an eagle lit on Pindus with dripping beak  
and red,

Between his crimson talons, he holds a severed head,  
He feasts upon the olive eyes that lack their lustre-  
light,

And keener grows a hundredfold the orbit of his  
sight.

He cracks the skull in pieces and picks the scattered  
brain,

And fiercer grows his courage and more his might  
and main,

He feels his pinions stronger and longer many spans,  
With the strength and youth and hardihood that  
were the murdered man's.

O Ali, dog of Jannina, the headsman of the east,  
Chimári well remembers who makes the eagles' feast !

## ZALONGOS

## THE LAST FIGHT OF SULI

ZALONGOS was that mountain hight  
Where Suli's star went down in night,  
The star that kindled as it fell  
A flame on freedom's citadel ;  
Which flashed across from sea to sea  
The signal-fire of liberty.

Through twenty years of battle  
They kept the dog at bay,  
The dog that rules in Jannina,  
And sends his sons to slay :  
And never Suliote maiden,  
And never captive wife,  
Had sold to false Liápids  
Her honour for her life ;  
But the pharas of the mountain  
Were ever thin and few,  
And traitors grow in every soil  
When gold can find the clue.

He had promised peace to Suli,  
The terms were meet and fair,  
And when they trusted in his bond  
Fell on them unaware.

There are none in Avarikos,  
In Kako-Suli none,  
Kiunghi's rafters smoulder yet,  
Kiápha has not one.

In Jannina in the market-place  
Their heads are stacked in piles,  
And Ali the dog in his palace  
Counts over them and smiles.

But the last and best of Suli  
Will never yield nor fly,  
And these will keep Zalongos' steep,  
Or show the way to die.

And deadly was the fusilade  
Those roving mountain marksmen made ;  
From clump to clump of lentisk green,  
Through splintered rocks they glide  
unseen ;

And flint and steel struck never spark  
To speed the ball that missed its mark,

Yet on and on the Pasha's ranks  
Drew slowly up the mountain flanks.

The rugged peaks are wild and sheer  
As Suli's eagle eyries here,  
With dark defiles of narrow span,  
And boulder rocks that mask a man.  
But what should those few hundreds do ?  
For not one thousand came, nor two,  
But five, and ten, and thousands more  
Press on where these have gone before,  
Till every mountain path and spur,  
And every slope of stunted fir,  
And every gorge and every glen  
Is swarming with the kilted men.

From morn to noon the battle grew,  
Till midday blazed from out the blue,  
While hidden hands that never tire  
Pour down the slope a dropping fire ;  
And aye, as Suli's sons retreat  
They burn the scrub beneath their feet,  
Till higher, higher, bare and black,  
A ring that narrowed marked their track ;

.

Yet on and on, through smoke and flame,  
The hounds of Vizir Ali came.

Then noon went by, and up the ridge  
    The sun struck ruby red,  
But redder on Zalongos' side  
    Was the blood of Ali's dead ;  
Then the dark shadows deepened,  
    And the pale stars grew bright,  
A mist rose up the gorges,  
    And sudden fell the night ;  
But still those echoes rang with cries,  
Of dying men in agonies,  
Wild shrieks to those who answer not,  
And rattle of the musket shot.

The night went by—each volley's crash,  
Revealed new foemen by the flash,  
And every time the flare showed red  
Some mountain bullet claimed its dead ;  
Yet evermore the burning slope  
Shut out another door of hope,  
For close behind the moving flame  
Fresh hordes of those Liápids came,



Till through the bloody mist and smoke  
The second dawn of battle broke.

Upon a high rock platform  
    Hard by the summit's crest,  
The Suliote mothers sat and watched  
    Their babies at the breast ;  
The mountain rim dropped sheer and grim  
    From that high citadel  
To where far down in murk and gloom  
Deep furrowed runs the stream of doom  
    That has its source in hell.  
They waited for the morning sun—  
They saw the heights were lost and won,  
And Suli's star, long clouded o'er,  
Had set in blood for evermore ;  
And vain it were to suckle braves,  
And end as demon Ali's slaves !

What words were said, what grim debate,  
    No man will ever know ;  
The firing still rang up the rocks,  
    And muttered back below.  
They did not weep, nor tear the hair,  
Betray one gesture of despair,

But with a seeming mute accord  
    They rose up in a row.  
Men saw each mother snatch her child  
    To one long clinging kiss,  
A kiss to keep, a kiss to sleep,  
Then fling them down the horrid deep  
    Of Acheron's abyss.  
Their lives the mountains cradled,  
    Freedom the mountains gave,  
So in the mountains' hollow arms  
    Be the free Suliote's grave !

Their foes shall see with bated breath  
How Suli's women welcome death  
    Unshrived of living priest,  
While round their feet the muskets peal,  
And overhead the vultures wheel,  
    Impatient for the feast.  
Then linking hands one last time more  
They trod the Syrtos dance of yore—  
The dance that oft on eves of spring  
Would draw them round its magic ring  
By Kako-Suli's frowning doors  
Or Avariko's threshing floors,

While weirdly chanted, shrill and strong,  
Defiant rose the dancing-song.

But ever as the ring wound round  
Towards the bastion's outer bound,  
The waving chain a moment stands,  
The last unlinks her clinging hands,  
And moving on in rhythmic grace  
Leaps over into space.  
Nor ever one looked down the edge  
Of that sheer eagle-haunted ledge  
To mark what trace along the steep  
Of those who took the horrid leap,  
But dancing to the dancing strain,  
Shrill o'er the bullets' iron rain,  
The last one still with tearless face  
Shoots out in order from her place,  
Till only ten, till five, and four  
Are left to tread the measure o'er.  
The foes draw near ; oh, haste ! make haste !  
Till three, and two, and one at last,  
Who, like some Mænad god-possessed,  
Shrieks the wild death-song o'er the rest,  
The dirge of Suli, and her own,  
Then plunges headlong down, alone.

And what of those who still were left  
To hold the eyrie of the Klepht?  
A few with Bòtzaris to guide  
Shall breast and break the deathly tide,  
And win to where the road is free,  
Toward Parga and the island sea;  
A few shall cleave a bloody path  
Across the closing ring,  
To venge as freedom's aftermath,  
This carnage of the spring;  
To sit perhaps at Byron's door,  
And tell this story o'er and o'er,  
To still defy the hornèd moon,  
By Misolonghi's wan lagoon,  
And yet may be in direr need  
To man the breach and fight and bleed,  
And dare another hero-deed.

But thus beneath Zalongos' side  
The mothers and the children died,  
That Suli might not breed again  
A race of less heroic men.

## THE LUTE OF ORPHEUS

ORPHEUS dead, the Thracian Mænads left him lying  
marble-pale,  
Thrust the daggers through their hair-knots, shrieking,  
fled along the vale.

But the still face in the rushes and the eyes that had  
no sight  
Stared with pitiful appealing through the shadows of  
the night.

And the night-bird missed his answer, and a sadness  
marred her song,  
And the wind sighed in the willows, and the stream  
bewailed his wrong.

And the clouds swept tears for sorrow, and the wan  
moon veiled her eyes,  
For the sob of stricken nature seemed to penetrate  
the skies.



There one found him who had loved him, in the reed-  
bed gashed and torn,  
Where of old she heard him singing in the silence of  
the morn ;

Found her hero far-off worshipped, dimly known and  
deified,  
Found the magic lute beside him and the lute-strings  
all untied.

Bent a laurel bough to crown him, smoothed the  
damp hair on his head,  
Closed the startled eyes, and gently kissed the cold  
lips of her dead.

And she decked the corse with rushes, hid the red  
and horrid scars,  
Said, 'O silent voice of music, re-awakened with  
the stars,

When up there at Zeus' high feasting, crowned you  
strike a louder lute,  
Seeing all things, oh remember one whose love was  
meek and mute.'

Then the Muses came lamenting by the Strymon's  
willowy shore,  
Wept immortal tears bewailing, 'Worship is on earth  
no more.

'Thou that lovedst, thou that weepest, thine un-  
satisfied desire  
Shall awake the broken music of the silent singer's  
lyre.

'Sing of love as he of beauty, sing of tears as he of  
mirth,  
Sing of peace as he of passion, sing the woman-song  
of earth.'

So they twined their hair for lute-strings, kissed unrest  
into her eyes,  
Bared her soul to human sorrow, tuned her lips to  
human sighs.

And they sped her forth to wander, touching mortal  
hearts to tears,  
First on earth of maiden singers in the morning of  
the years.

## CHAROS

*(From the Romaic)*

WHY are the mountains dark and the hills all  
woebegone?

Is it the wind at war there or the rain that blots the  
sun?

It is not the wind at war there, it is not the driving  
rain,

It is Charos passing over them, with the dead folk in  
his train;

The old men follow after, and before the young men  
go,

And the children, the little children, are slung at his  
saddle-bow;—

The old men beg a grace of him, and the young men  
speak him fair;

‘Good Charos, rest by the fountain, or halt in the  
village square,

That the lads may play at the stone-throwing, and  
the old men drink their fill,

That the children may go and gather the wildflowers  
on the hill.'

The old men beg a grace of him, and the young men  
speak him fair :—

'By never a fountain will I rest, nor halt in the  
village square ;

The mothers would come for water, and would hear  
their babes complain,

And the wedded folk would never part, if they once  
were met again.'

## PENTELIKON

TO C. C. M.

I THINK the memory I love best  
Is one of Attic stars  
On old Pentele's marble breast  
Among her quarried scars ;  
When fierce day died, a cooler breeze,  
Would steal across our poplar trees,  
And westward bring the breath of seas.

And when the moons grew full and fair  
They drew us forth to climb  
The path that seemed a marble stair  
Between the tufted thyme ;  
Those stars hung down so large and nigh,  
Far closer to the earth than sky,  
And we were silent, you and I.

We scaled the rugged crest and lay  
On nature's thymy bed,



To watch the meteors at their play  
    In sapphire deeps o'erhead,  
To dream strange forms moved to and fro  
The crescent plain that lay below,  
    The ghosts of battle long ago.

There earth and sea lay side by side  
    Entranced in summer sleep,  
And shadowy islands dim descried  
    Showed o'er a shadowy deep :  
And waves of mountain faintly white  
Rose up from mist-worlds out of sight,  
    Like crowns of crystal in the night.

Then slowly east to watching eyes  
    A band of rainbow red  
Grew o'er the bound of seas and skies,  
    And the stars paled and fled,  
While through the flush, light aureoled,  
Up sailed a sphere of molten gold,  
    And down the bay the glory rolled.

Isle after island rose to ken  
    Beneath that ruby band

The amber waves came racing in  
    To tell the sleeping land,  
The scattered mists wreathed up in smoke,  
Through purple gorges morning broke,  
    And all the rugged mountain woke.

The hound that night through vigil kept  
    Gives one deep warning note,  
The shepherd springs from where he slept,  
    And shakes his white capote ;  
The goat-bells tinkle, watch-dogs bay,  
The herd springs up the trackless way,  
    And in a moment all is day.

Ah, those were nights, those Attic nights,  
    On old Pentele's brow !  
Long days to me of keen delights,  
    Those summer days !—By now,  
The myrtle sheds its bloom like snows,  
The oleander buds unclose  
    New clusters of the ruddy rose ;

The fountain from the marble's breast  
    Leaps forth as fresh and fair,

The wind at eve still wanders west,

Though we be no more there.

And where the suns of Hellas set

A trail of glory lingers yet,

I could not if I would forget.

ADDITIONAL POEMS





## SPRING IN THE CAMPAGNA

YOUNG April waved a milk-white hand  
And made new magic in the land.  
Now over all the rolling plain  
Her purple wind-bells bloom again ;  
The blossom falls, the Judas-trees  
Unthread their coral rosaries ;  
The tufted fennels thrust on high  
A golden broom to sweep the sky ;  
And over broken archways flows  
The saffron of the budding rose.

Now all the green grass country sings,  
Now stirs the sap, and where it springs  
A memory-haunted fragrance fills  
The ilex hollows in the hills.  
Now misty seas of borage bloom  
En-isle the ruined roadside tomb,  
And now as when the world began  
The lamb's first cry goes out to Pan.

Now where the winding stream divides  
The poplars on its willowed sides,  
The whitethroat tells his happy tale  
And mocks the lingering nightingale.  
Now in the shadows of the glen  
Uncurls the timid cyclamen,  
And he may find who cares and knows  
Wet dips where white narcissus blows ;  
Now all the warm, caressing air  
Breathes violets, violets everywhere.

And here, where still the tender touch  
Of slow decay has left so much,  
Where centred memories linger round  
Each landmark set in storied ground,  
When spring makes all things fresh and fair  
And felt more keenly, glimpses rare  
Of that unfathomed world arise  
Which once I saw with childhood's eyes.

## NINFA

WHERE the steep Volscian ridge leans down  
To the low Pontine shore  
We found a little silent town  
In which men dwell no more.  
Mid-spring had strewn with lavish hands  
That wilderness with flowers,  
Where mirrored in her mere she stands  
A wreck of broken towers,  
A fortress of the border feud  
In long-forgotten years,  
That consecrates to solitude  
Her triumphs and her tears.

Dark ivy shrouds her girdling walls  
A hundred summers deep,  
And stillness like a spell enthalls  
Her everlasting sleep ;  
A sleep no jarring voices break,—

The faint sob from her stream,  
The sway of rush-beds in the lake  
Accord with her long dream.  
The marsh bird comes to hide her nest  
Here in a safe retreat ;  
The silver nettles have possessed  
Wide square and trackless street ;  
The arches of her palace courts  
Are tapestried with vine ;  
Tall thistles close her battle-ports  
And bar the unroofed shrine,  
Where frescoed choir and moss-green nave  
Are choked with bramble-rose,  
And through the creviced apse a wave  
Of honeysuckle flows ;  
Where wild valerien's crimson fires  
Light altars long grown dim,  
And jasmine's heavy scent inspires  
The insect's drowsy hymn.  
  
Beyond, toward the waning day,  
The fens stretch rank and wide,  
In all their reckless pomp of May,  
To the blue Tuscan tide.

The poppied fields are one red flare,  
And banks of golden broom  
Make all the languid lowland air  
Oppressive with perfume.

What bandit clan of lawless days,  
What brood of outcast men,  
Dwelt here to watch the southward ways  
That cross the ill-famed fen !

What hands for good or evil wrought !

What fervent hearts grew cold !

What thinkers here untimely thought

In that grim world of old ?

What stricken captives fronted fate ?

What penitents cried woe ?

How did they fare in love and hate

Who died here long ago ?

Alike on belfry tower and keep

Impartial ivy waves,

And wheresoe'er her dead folk sleep

The poppies hide their graves.

Lo while we dream the skies turn gold,

The evening draws to end,



Dark over Ninfa's ruined hold  
The purple shadows blend ;  
And gabled fane and fortress tower,  
And lake and winding stream  
Grow conscious of the passing hour,  
And catch the transient gleam.  
The rose flush fades from Norba's height  
And Circe's cape afar ;  
Now Cori shows a single light  
Beneath a single star.  
Now myriad swarms of flitting fires  
Light up the path we climb  
Between dark banks of scented briars  
With feet that bruise the thyme ;  
The heart's quick pulse is almost pain  
In this tense mood of May ;  
And as we leave the shadowy plain  
And make the mountain way,  
We turn and see, where swift night falls,  
The marsh-land's misty breath  
Refold the shroud round those grey walls  
Long dedicate to death.

THE SILENT PRESENCE

SPRING brings us back the nightingales,  
But one of all her voices fails.  
Could we that stay behind but know  
The journey that our loved ones go,  
And if our longing be not vain  
To bring their presence near again !

I must believe this April mirth  
Still moves you, lover of the earth,  
To haunt familiar pathways yet  
And feel how little we forget.  
Still, happy spirit, freed by death,  
I think you breathe the violet's breath,  
Or lean against the song-bird's breast  
To watch the secret of the nest,  
And clasped in nature's warm embrace  
See all things nearer face to face ;  
A consciousness without the strife,  
A soul without the pain of life.

## FRANK RHODES: A MEMORY

To that fierce land of gloom and gleam  
Where we at least once lived our dream,  
From this remote and placid north  
My longing and my love go forth  
To five good friends,—and surely few  
Have linked their lives with friends like you !  
Some bore brave scars, well won in fight,  
But not in battle's stern delight  
Was it their happier fate to fall ;  
An evil siren lured them all ;  
And poison swamp and tropic sun  
Stayed their strong heart-beats, one by one,  
Till you, dear Frankie, you the last  
Have gone the way the rest had passed,  
And only I alone remain  
To dream the good time back again.

Young were we still, twelve years ago  
When we went southward, proud to know

We were of those the sea queen sends  
For witness where her mandate ends.  
And still it seems but yesterday  
That eve we sighted far away  
The shadowy horn of Guardafui,  
When sudden night closed round a sea  
That drowned the old familiar stars,  
And we beheld through dripping spars  
The Southern Cross climb up the sky,  
Raymond and Roddy, you and I.  
How all was welcome, morn and noon  
And starry eve and Afric moon ;  
As yet we had no watch to keep,  
Light-hearted farers through the deep.

At last one dawn revealed our goal,  
The palm-fringed shore, the fretting shoal,  
The spice-groves, sloping greenly down  
To the long white-walled Arab town,  
The anchored dhows, the teeming beach,  
Where with a hand we thronged to reach  
Stood Gerald's self,—a shade of care  
Across the brow once debonair,

But in his eyes the joy and power  
Of him who feels his triumph's hour.  
And one was by his side whose name  
Were high on England's roll of fame,  
Had it not been his choice to shun  
The paths in which applause is won,  
A friend to love, a foe to fear,  
Sailor and soldier and vizir.

Your dusky train had gone before  
A day's march from the mainland shore,  
For the sea queen's work brooked no delay,  
And four must go and two must stay.  
First when the moment came to part  
That shadow fell to chill the heart,  
The half-formed thought, which would it be  
If Dame Adventure claimed her fee,—  
As you four took the inland track,  
And we two lost you looking back,

Of those who met and parted so  
Good Raymond was the first to go.  
A thousand miles from that sea's strand  
That links the English to their land,



Where few who cared will ever pass  
His hillock in the matted grass,  
Beyond the great dividing Rift  
He lies, the brave, the strong, the swift.<sup>1</sup>

A year went by and Gerald came  
Returning flushed with early fame ;  
And as the race is to the fleet  
All ways seemed smooth before his feet ;  
His outstretched hand was on the goal  
Responsive to his ardent soul,—  
But still the witch that knows no ruth  
Reached back to claim his conquering youth,  
And all our love and hope and pride  
Were spent in vain, when Gerry died.<sup>2</sup>

By ancient Nile a barren Khor  
Hides yet another of the four,  
Where seven feet of desert sand  
Check eager Roddy's bridle-hand ;  
Where caravans that pay their toll  
To the Sheikh who watches Ambigol,

<sup>1</sup> Captain Raymond Portal, died in Uganda, 1893.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Gerald Portal, died on his return from Uganda, 1894.

Enquire what means the granite scored  
With alien writing and a sword,  
What soldier holds the rock defile  
That leads them back to Father Nile.<sup>1</sup>

And where the palms of Zanzibar  
Sway languid to the tropic star,  
Tired out at last and borne to rest  
By those dark folk who loved him best  
Lloyd Mathews lies, his wanderings done,  
His thirty years of toil and sun.  
True English heart, whom all too few  
Of those you served so greatly knew,  
Sleep, full of peace, in that far grave,—  
The all you gained for all you gave.<sup>2</sup>

So you, dear Frank, were last of those  
To whom a tender thought outgoes,  
With dreams of days not lived in vain.  
For you while life and love remain  
Shall memory keep, undried by years,  
A green place near the source of tears.

<sup>1</sup> Major Roderick Owen, died at Ambigol, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Lloyd William Mathews, died in Zanzibar, 1901.

Well know we how, in evil days,  
You bore the brunt of men's dispraise ;  
Well prized we then the stern control  
That sealed from speech your loyal soul ;  
And cared to feel your silence bear  
The blame it would not shift elsewhere.  
O golden heart in time of stress,  
Of failing hope or ill success,  
Who met the scorn of fate with mirth  
And loved your fellow-man on earth ;  
You that had seen your share of strife  
And lived and cared so much for life,  
Why did you heed the siren hand  
That drew you back to Upas land ?

What wonder if I hear the call  
Of that far voice that lured them all !  
I cross the sandy wastes again  
The great mimosa-tufted plain,  
I share the thirsty march, through clear  
Clean mornings, and with eve I hear  
The marsh things crying, see the fierce  
Short sunsets, the large stars that pierce

The tangled tent of tropic green,  
And all the wonders we have seen  
In that grim world of gloom and gleam,  
Where evermore, across my dream,  
Pervading all, I still behold  
The kind worn face, so young, so old,  
The lifted chin, the deep-set eyes  
At once so merry and so wise,  
The never-failing helpful smile  
That haunts all ways from Cape to Nile.

1905.

ONCE, LONG AGO

ONCE, long ago, my own winged words  
    Bore me I knew not where,  
As in a stormy spring the birds  
    Are blown about in air.

Now I am master of my theme  
    To sing or to refrain,  
To analyse the prisoned dream  
    Or give it life again.

I may not doubt that truth belongs  
    To this serener day,  
But some lost magic touched those songs  
    That went their own wild way.



## A DEDICATION

I THOUGHT indeed to make you many songs,  
To whom the best of all I am belongs.  
But now I know why one beloved name  
Shall prompt no music to importune fame.  
Songs are but words, and words are poor and cold,  
And hollow, hollow all the set rhymes ring ;  
I sang of love who knew it not of old,  
And now I know I cannot sing !

Let this content you, if my whole life show  
What none but you would greatly care to know,  
If mute communion more avail to teach  
The depth and height no range of song can reach.  
Not both good gifts the jealous gods allot,  
The artist's self forbears to touch one string ;  
Of old I sang of love who knew it not,  
And now I know I cannot sing !

## ENVOI

*Twenty years have gone their way,  
City of the Violet Crown,  
Since I sang of thy renown.  
Twenty years, and what are they  
By thine immemorial age!  
Time to see the gold turn grey,  
And the worthiest miss their wage,  
And the fool outlive the sage.*

*They have seen thine arm made bold,  
City of the Violet Crown,  
And the horned moon go down,  
As a voice long still foretold  
Once by Misolonghi's fen ;  
Twenty years that made me old  
Gave thee all thy youth again  
In the motherhood of men.*

*Now where far Corcyra's isle  
Like a lonely outpost stands  
Watching the unransomed lands,  
Where Chimari's crags revile  
Memories of an evil past,  
Where across the grim defile  
Tragic Suli's shade is cast,  
Surely dawn comes up at last.*

*Athens, we were lovers long,  
All the old unhappy days,  
Through division and dispraise,  
When thy nearest did thee wrong:  
I whose faith has not been vain  
Need to bring thee no new song  
Now the wingless Nike's fane  
Claims its goddess back again.*

*Red with storm the year goes by ;  
Much is done,—far more to do,  
When thy banner's white and blue  
Fronting a serener sky*

*Brings these stricken valleys peace.*  
*Not enough to dare and die,*  
*Dare to live when strife shall cease*  
*Greatly for the greater Greece !*

*Dec. 31, 1912.*





## NOTES

### Page 17.—THERMOPYLÆ.

The pass of Thermopylæ, in the strict sense of the word, exists no longer. The whole configuration of the land has changed. The alluvial deposits of the Spercheius, which enters the Maliac gulf from the valley dividing Oeta from Othrys, have created a marshy plain of several square miles in extent, where once the sea came up in shallows to the precipitous mountain-side, leaving only the narrow road, some fifty feet in breadth, across which ran the wall whence the Greeks sallied out for the first two days' battle. The sulphur springs, which gave the place its name, have also evidently changed their course repeatedly, and their spreading waters have covered with a thick and ever-increasing saline deposit the exact spot where the fighting took place. It is still a wild and desolate scene. Crane and heron flap their dusky wings over miles of waving rushes between the rock wall and the sea; the peaks of Callidromus break the blue sky, whence the fierce sun burns down on the yellow crystal-crustèd floor, over which the shadows of the poising eagles pass. The only sign of human habitation is a ruined mill, and the spirit of solitude seems to haunt the place.—*From my Journal in Greece.*

### Page 19.—DELOS.

The lesser Delos, the sacred island, is a granite rock rising to a considerable elevation in the central height of Cynthus, which gave its name to the two children of Latona. In the distance it appeared bare and treeless; but as we approached we discovered that it was a very isle of flowers—everywhere between the granite boulders were innumerable marigolds and

scarlet poppies. Save for the solitary guardian in his hut among the ruins, the island has no regular inhabitants, but a few shepherds from the neighbouring Mykonos come over with their flocks from time to time to pasture and to reap the scanty harvest. . . . Half-way up the slope of Cynthus stands the grotto, or, to be more exact, the primitive rock temple of the Sun God, probably the oldest place of worship in Greece. Before it lies a wilderness of ruin, the bases and substructions of what must have formed as grand a group of buildings as the world could show: fallen columns, broken cornices, masses of wrought and carven stones piled one upon the other in formless, hopeless confusion. . . . The great temple of Apollo still admits of identification, the rest of little more than conjecture.—*From my Journal in Greece.*

Page 29.—TÆNARON.

‘A race as wild as nature where they dwell.’

The Mainotes who occupy the rocky promontory, which is in reality a prolongation of the range of Taygetus, terminating in Cape Matapan, boast that in all the vicissitudes through which the Morea has passed they alone have never submitted to a foreign domination. They claim to be the descendants of the Spartans of old, and are most probably the direct descendants of the Perioeci of Lakonia, who occupied the poor lands round the coasts, and who were by origin Hellenes, settled there before the Dorian invasion. They are quite different in physical type from their neighbours, and their language abounds in Doricisms, and is closely akin to that spoken by the Dorian Sphakiotes in the mountains of Crete.

It is certain that the various invaders of the Peloponnese have always endeavoured to conciliate the dwellers in the wild promontory, whose pathless mountains and barren plateau would have been very difficult to occupy; but, nevertheless, they have always been the first to rise against the foreigner. Their land is the bleakest and poorest conceivable, and not calculated to tempt the invader. But the Mainotes are passionately attached to it, and ever ready to fight in its behalf. Their villages are mere nests of towers loopholed for

defence; and the vendetta exists between family and family, between village and village, and among them a greater number of old-world usages are preserved than anywhere else in Greece. They still enjoy exceptional privileges at the hands of the government, such as immunity from taxation, which it would be useless to attempt to collect, and hitherto comparatively few foreigners have visited their desolate but romantic home.—*From my Journal in Greece, 1890.*

Page 56.—TANAGRA.

Of Korinna's poetry no fragment survives; and all that is known of her is drawn from the account Pausanias has given of his visit to Tanagra. There he saw her portrait, the beauty of which struck him so much that he suggests it was perhaps her grace and charm which won the Theban judges to accord her the prize in the contest of song over their own immortal Pindar. In a little shed in a neighbouring village are a few fragments of sculptured stone and a number of clay coffins from the site of Tanagra. Among them is a gravestone which bears Korinna's name.

Page 70.—THE SONG OF THE KLEPHT.

The popular poetry of Greece is very comprehensive and rich, and among its most interesting features are the so-called Klephtic ballads, celebrating the exploits of those outlawed mountaineers who throughout the Turkish domination kept the spirit of freedom alive in their rocky fastnesses, whence they maintained an unceasing desultory warfare with the invader. The origin and history of these marauding bands is still somewhat obscure; but it would appear that while those of the Greek peasantry who submitted to the Mussulman yoke were allowed considerable liberties, and permitted to form a sort of irregular militia, known as the *Armatoli*, for the defence of privileges originally conceded, others, rejecting all overtures of the conqueror, took to the mountains, and formed themselves into armed bands, carrying on a guerilla warfare against the Turkish governors, and making raids upon the new settlers, not always sparing those of their countrymen who had sub-

mitted to the foreigner. These men were known by the appellation of *Klephts*, a name which, signifying originally *robber*, was ere long regarded as a title of distinction. Later, when the *Armatoli* came into conflict with the Mussulman militia, the distinction between them and the *Klephts* practically passed away, and it was from their ranks that the foremost fighters in the Hellenic uprising were drawn. The ballads in which their exploits were told were sung by blind beggars at the village fairs at the close of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. Thus these men of the mountain, whose lives were passed entirely in the open air, moving from range to range where plunder or revenge allured them, became the darling heroes of the popular imagination, which credited them with almost fabulous powers of strength and endurance.

The *Klephts* of the continent and the corsairs of the islands and the coasts were the protest of liberty against a foreign domination, and the voice of the humbler people, glorying in nobilities which other lands and times might question, has painted them with sympathetic indulgence, perhaps not wholly as they were, but rather as they would have had them be. Their indifference to hardships, pain, and death, their loyalty of comradeship, their physical courage, were beyond all question, and the folk-ballads in which their names are preserved are the note of ideality, rising above the actual brutalities and bloodshed which characterised an era of struggle and rebellion. A full account of the *Klephts* and *Klephtic* songs may be found in my *Customs and Lore of Modern Greece*.

The poem included in this volume is not a translation. It embodies the expression of one or two snatches of folk-song in an attempt to convey the savage spirit and rugged picturesqueness of the popular muse of Greece a hundred years ago.

*Liméri*, the name given to the mountain *rendezvous* of the *Klephts* where they spent the day, setting forth on their raids rather on moonless and cloudy nights in order to escape observation. The etymology of the word is *ὅλη ἡμέρα* = *the whole day*. In such meeting-places on the summits of well-nigh unscalable rocks they would keep their stores of ammunition hidden in caves or rock-fissures, and thither they would bring their plunder and camp secure, spending the day in gymnastic



exercises, in practising their aim, or in singing to the sound of a rude mandoline known as the *lyra*.

*Liápidis*.—The *Liápidis* are a tribe of Mussulman Albanians. A great number of them took service under Ali, the notorious Pacha of Jannina, and the name was applied by the Greeks and Christian Albanians as a term of contempt to the Mussulman militia generally.

Page 74.—ZALONGOS.

There is no more romantic page in history than that which tells the story of the little mountain commonwealth of Suli, which for so many years defied the authority and repulsed the trained armies of the notorious Ali Pacha of Jannina. The origin of the Suliotes is somewhat obscure, though a chronicler has professed to trace their history back into the seventeenth century. The principal families undoubtedly derived their origin from different districts, and although their language was Greek, they seem to have consisted chiefly of Christian Albanians, with a smaller admixture of Greeks, who, flying before the oppression of the Moslem invader, had taken refuge in the almost inaccessible mountains of Chimari, where they established a patriarchal community, governed by the heads of their families or clans, which were known as *pharas*. They had neither laws nor law-courts, but the heads of the families acted as arbiters in all disputes, and met in a council, the matter for whose deliberations was almost exclusively war.

At the time when they became conspicuous in history they possessed four villages in the mountain of Suli, and seven in the plain, the Tetrachorion and the Heptachorion. At one time they also controlled between fifty and sixty subject villages, which were, however, abandoned to their fate in war. The inhabitants of the seven lower villages, on the other hand, being regarded as genuine Suliotes, were allowed, on the commencement of hostilities, to retire into the mountain, which is approached by one of the wildest and deepest defiles in all these rugged ranges. In places the way is only practicable on foot along a perilous ledge, high up the vertical side of the mountain of Suli, whence far below, in the gloom of the chasm,

the Acheron may be seen falling in cascades over the rocks, but silently, owing to the depth and distance.

The total number of the mountain community never exceeded 5000 souls, and they could not put more than 1500 fighting men into the field ; and yet with this little force they kept the armies of Ali at bay for a number of years, and inflicted several signal defeats on his trained Albanian troops. They had brought the tactics of the Klephtic warfare to perfection ; from childhood they were trained marksmen, and moved over their wild mountains with the agility of a chamois. The women often fought beside the men, and the many folk-songs which record the exploits of Suli are full of acts of heroism performed by the wives and mothers of the mountaineers. Concealed among the scrub, or hidden behind boulders of rock, they fought with comparative impunity, and so quick was their eye, that it is said they could fire with deadly effect by night at the flash of their enemies' guns. At the time when Ali, appointed 'warden of the passes,' was attempting to put down the irregular bands which infected the Pindus, and to consolidate his power in north-western Greece, the Suliotes were led by an ascetic priest, or monk, Samuel, who believed himself to be, and was certainly regarded by the mountaineers as an inspired prophet. By his direction they built the fortress of Kiunghi, in the inmost recesses of their mountain, as a storehouse for their ammunition and material. It was here in the church that the powder stores were gathered, to which Samuel set fire, immolating himself among the ruins at the close of their eventful story, rather than surrender, to the emissaries of Ali, the keys with which he had been entrusted.

Towards the close of the last century an expedition upon a large scale was led by Ali in person, to reduce the defiant Suliotes to subjection. But his 15,000 picked Albanians were drawn on by the tactics of the mountaineers far into the rocky defiles, and at a given moment attacked by the Suliote women in front, and simultaneously by an ambush of the men under Bótzaris and Lambros Tzavellas in flank and rear. A wild panic ensued ; Ali himself fled in terror back to Jannina, and was forced to sue for peace, and yield important concessions. Eight years later the unequal struggle began again. Ali had recourse to every art of treachery and corruption to break up



the solidarity of the little commonwealth, and succeeded in gaining over one or two of the more important families. His son Veli, isolating their various strongholds, and attacking them in overwhelming numbers, succeeded in overpowering them one by one after a desperate resistance, under the leadership of the young Photos, son of Lambros Tzavellas. The survivors, attacked once more when marching into neutral territory under the capitulation they had forced Ali to agree to, retired to fight a last battle on the heights of Zalongos. It was then that the episode occurred which forms the subject of this poem.

*Kiapha*, *Avarikos*, *Samoniva*, and *Kako-Suli* formed the Tetrachorion, to which the fortress of *Kiunghi* was added later.

*Lidpids*—see note to the ‘Song of the Klepht.’

*The Pharas of the Mountain*, the clans or families—see above.

*To sit perchance at Byron's door*.—In the heroic story of Misolonghi, another Bótzaris and another Tzavellas will long be remembered. The name of Suliote was still a terror when Byron came for the last time to Greece, and the glorious death of Marco Bótzaris at Karpenisi recalled to interest the extraordinary exploits of his countrymen some twenty years before.

#### Page 85.—CHAROS.

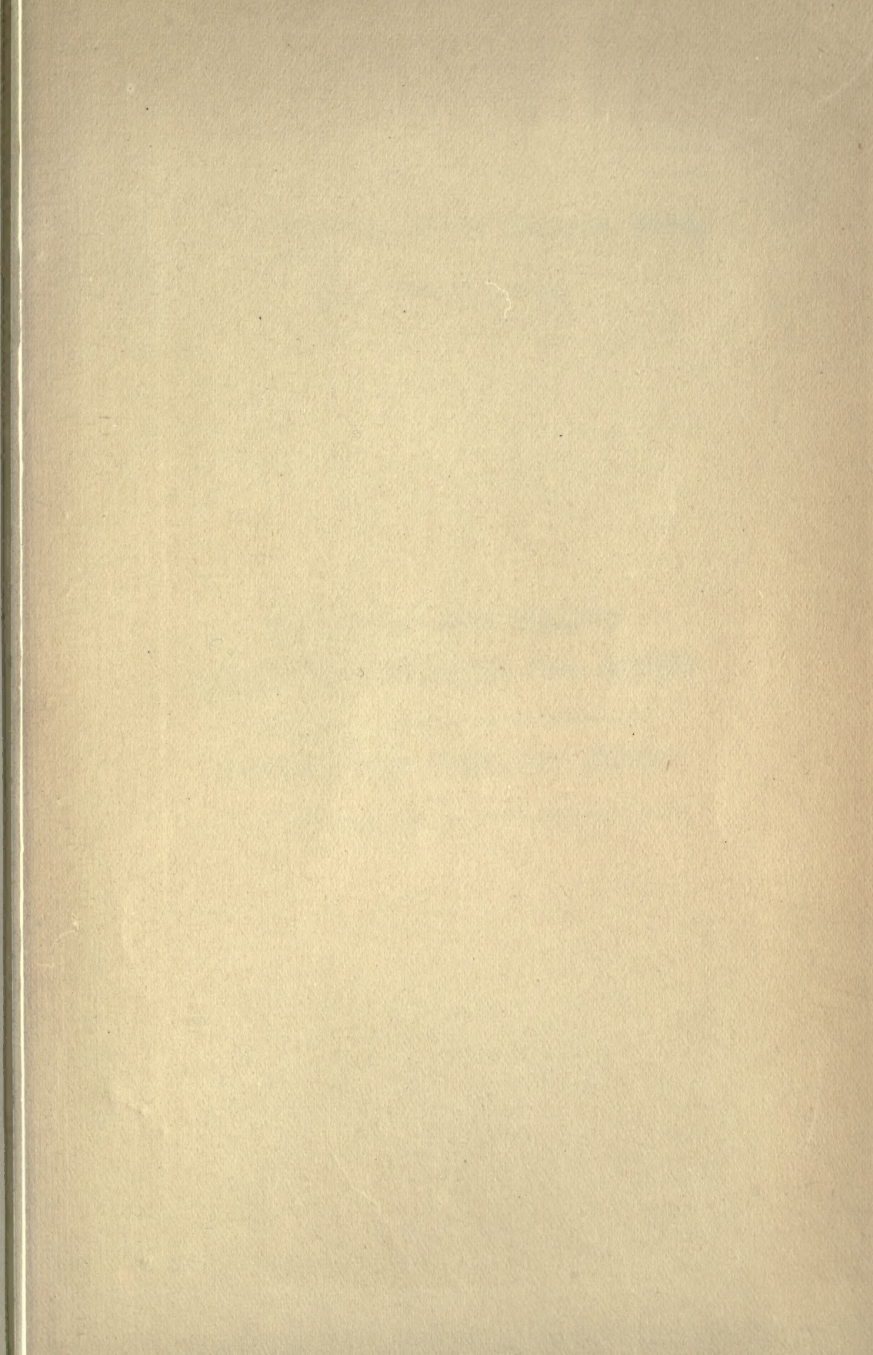
*Charos*.—Among the most curious survivals of ancient myth is the reappearance of the ferryman of Styx as the angel of death, or rather as the personification of an inexorable law of nature. The identification of Charon with Thanatos occurs in classical authors more than once; and as in Homer, the father and fountain of sacred myth, the boatman of hell is unknown, it is not impossible that the popular superstition has preserved the direct inheritance of a still older and less complex idea. He is pictured in the folk-poetry as an old man of sorrowful face, immovable to prayer, crafty and jealous, taking swift vengeance on those who defy his power, and glory unduly in their youth and strength. Sometimes he is

represented as the direct emissary of the Deity, but he dwells and controls the dead in that dark undefined land so often alluded to in the popular poetry, where the souls of the departed regret the sun and the trees and the fountains, that pagan land of nothingness which here still seems to appeal to the popular mind more powerfully than the promise of heaven or the menace of hell. This subject, with the various aspects of the Charos myth as it exists to-day, is treated exhaustively in my *Customs and Lore of Modern Greece*, chap. iv.

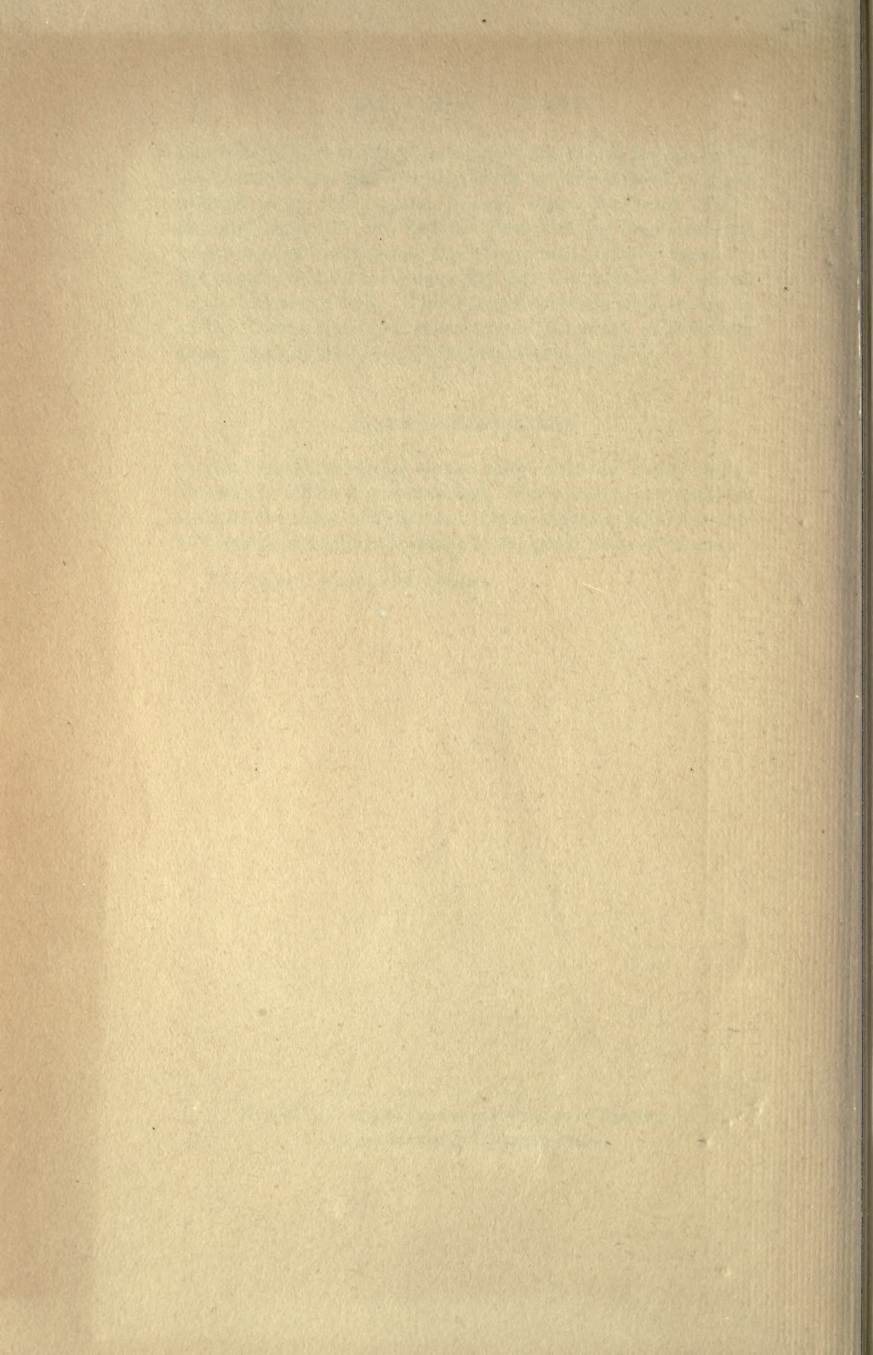
Page 87.—PENTELIKON.

The Pentelic mountain was so called from the Attic deme of Pentele, in which it was included. The ancients also spoke of it under the name of Brilettus. On its slopes is the monastery of Mendeli, a hospitable refuge in the great heats of summer.

*The crescent plain.*—Marathon.







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